



The Conservation Strip

CONSERVING NATURAL RESOURCES FOR A BETTER ENVIRONMENT

98 ALEXANDRIA PIKE, SUITE 31 ► WARRENTON, VA 20186

Is There a PDR In Your Future?

By John Schied

Hopefully, yes because farmland preservation is the top concern of Virginia young farmers.

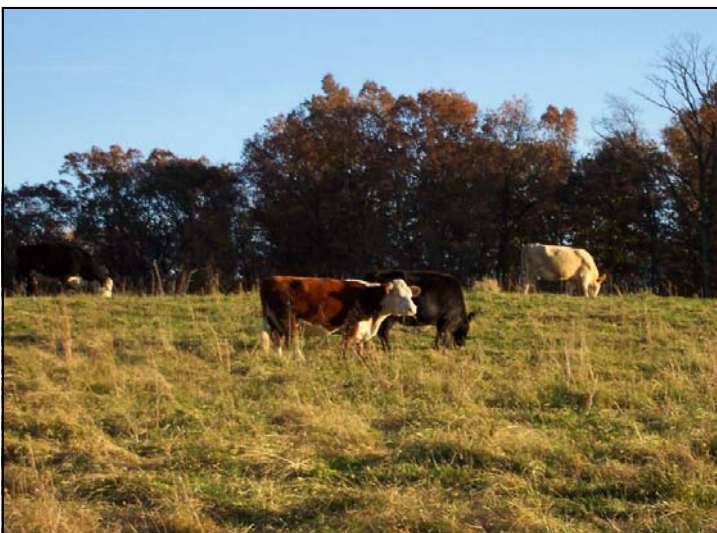
The purchase of development rights (PDR) is one opportunity to make the dreams of the nation's future farmer a reality. Once land is lost to development, it's gone forever. Land that makes good farmland is also ideal for housing tracts and shopping centers. Here in Fauquier County, the pressure to develop has never been greater with the large material builders fighting over whom will develop what next.

The PDR program allows farmers to have their cake and eat it too. This one time payment of \$20,000 per development right lets a farmer keep his land and still have money to buy more land, provide for retirement, or do with the money what he so chooses. To qualify to participate in this program, a farmer must meet four minimum eligibility criteria. These are (1) land is used for bona fide agricultural operations, (2) the farm is greater



To date, 2000 acres have been enrolled in the PDR program

than 50 acres, (3) farm is zoned Rural Agricultural (RA) or Rural Conservation (RC), (4) farm is not already under a conservation easement.



The main purpose of the PDR program is to help preserve bona fide agricultural land.

The PDR program here in Fauquier County started in 2002 to purchase the developments rights from farmers. To date, almost 2000 acres are protected from development.

The Board of Supervisors, in recognition of the threat to our rural heritage and the cost to taxpayers of development, has funded this program since 2002. In 2004, the Board added two cents to the real estate tax to fund the PDR program. Other sources of funds are roll back taxes, grants, matching funds and proffers.

If saving your farm for the future is a priority, the man to talk to is Ray Pickering at the Agricultural Development Office. The PDR Application Cycle runs from July 1 thru November 30. Call Ray at (540) 349-5314 or email him at ray.pickering@fauquiercounty.gov.

Springtime Highlights



Third grade students from Grace Miller Elementary learn about soil erosion with the Enviroscape model.



Calf petting is always popular as Home School and Private School students enjoy a day at Elk Mount.



Dave Crompton, Biology teacher at Liberty High School helps students identify macroinvertebrates.



The John Marshall SWCD hosted the Area II Envirothon at Crockett Park on April 15.



The JMSWCD staff hiked in the Linden area to see the trillium display and visit a construction site.



B.J. Valentine, Assistant County Soil Scientist, instructs students at the Elk Mount Field Day.

Erosion and Sediment Control Planning for the Rural Single-Family Homeowner

By Jennifer Gray, Erosion and Sediment Control Specialist

Fauquier County is made up of approximately 600 square miles in the northern area of Virginia. Recently the county has increasingly sustained the effects of sprawl from the growing D.C. region. The county experienced a population growth of 13.1% between 1990 and 2000; that rate is continuing to expand. This rising number of citizens has, of course, resulted in the need for additional housing. To most people, home construction is a new and exciting task; however, the detailed planning that goes into beginning such a project can quickly become overwhelming.



A permit is required for any project that disturbs over 10,000 square feet of land area. E&S controls are needed on this site

Erosion and sediment (E&S) control can be a major part of the building process, but is frequently not adequately planned for by home owners. It is important that the owner be aware of the extent of E&S control from the beginning of the project, in order to sufficiently organize the time and cost associated with it. When the home owner completes the permit package, for the construction of a rural single-family home, a Registered Land Disturber is required to sign an "Agreement in Lieu of Plan" form. In this form the permit holder agrees to be responsible for following the Virginia Erosion and Sediment Control law, established by the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Prior to beginning work on the permitted project, the land-disturber is required to install erosion and sediment control measures (information on state minimum standards and the installation of erosion controls can be found in the informational packet, enclosed with the

building permit. Feel free to contact John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District if any questions arise). Common controls include: a suitable stone construction entrance, to prevent tracking; perimeter silt fence, to contain any runoff sediment; and seed and straw mulch, to stabilize disturbed and denuded areas. Once the appropriate E&S measures are in place the owner should contact the District to begin erosion and sediment control inspections on the project. Once all of these steps have been completed, the owner may then commence work on the permitted project. The site will continue to be inspected by JMSWCD until it develops sufficient stabilization. It is important to remember that E&S control measures do require maintenance and have maximum effective life-spans; also, as a project progresses it is often necessary for additional controls to be installed. Once a site becomes adequately stabilized, a John Marshall inspector will authorize the removal of temporary E&S controls and the project file will be complete.

It is important to follow the established procedure and meet the minimum standards set forth in the Virginia Erosion and Sediment Control Handbook, in order to avoid any complications with the project. John Marshall SWCD staff members are available to answer any questions and follow up on citizen concerns. The District is located at 98 Alexandria Pike, Suite 31 in the Town of Warrenton and can be reached by dialing 540-347-3120 ext. 3.



A project nearing completion that shows silt fences, gravel drive, and vegetative cover in place.

What Are All Those Tubes?

The use of tree tubes has become very common over the last decade. However, many people still don't know what they are, and why local fields and roadsides are full of tall plastic tubes. Also referred to as trees shelters, grow tubes, and several other names, the tubes are used by landscapers, foresters, VDOT, and the John Marshall SWCD to protect and enhance the growth of tree seedlings.



There are many advantages to using tree tubes. The main advantage, confirmed by research, is that seedlings grow much faster. The tube acts like a mini-greenhouse and provides a good growing environment. In addition, the tubes protect the seedlings from mowers, wildlife, wind, and chemical spray drift. They are often used in conjunction with tree mats which provide weed control.

Tree tubes also offer economic returns. They allow the use of smaller seedlings that are inexpensive and easy to plant. They can cost from \$1-3 each depending on size and quantity purchased. Some types of tree tubes can be removed after a few years and re-used, others are designed to break apart and disintegrate as the tree grows in diameter and pushes against the tube.

JMSWCD personnel have been using the tubes for five years with hardwood seedlings planted for conservation purposes. They have been pleased with the results. While tree tubes are still not an everyday items at local garden centers, they are readily available from numerous forestry and horticultural supply companies.

CREP Opportunity Nearing End

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) expires with the current Farm Bill in September 2007. This leaves just two more tree planting seasons to establish riparian buffers.

Nearly 40 Fauquier landowners have participated in this program to date, fencing out over 30 miles of stream and planting more than 500 acres of riparian hardwood buffer (notice all the 4 foot tall white tubes, like those shown to the left, planted on 20x20 spacing as you drive around the county). This program pays participants a \$73.20/acre annual rental payment, as well as typically covering 75-100% of the installation costs. Contact the SWCD if interested.

Riparian Buffer Primer

A riparian forest buffer is an area of trees, shrubs, and other vegetation found next to stream channels and other waterways. The CREP program, as well as other conservation programs, encourage landowners to establish riparian buffers. Buffers provide many benefits to water quality.

Runoff flowing through a riparian buffer is slowed by the vegetation, allowing nutrients and sediments to settle in the soil of the buffer rather than entering the stream. The sediment becomes part of the buffer's soil, and the nutrients are taken up by the trees, shrubs, and other vegetation.

As the buffer matures, the tree canopy provides shade to the stream, which stabilizes water temperature and enhances the aquatic habitat for fish, insects, and other organisms. Riparian buffers also provide food and habitat for many species of wildlife, and provide travel corridors for movement between habitats.

Conservation Specialists who design riparian buffers usually select native trees and shrubs that are appropriate for each site. Several species of oak and hickory are commonly used, as well as green ash, river birch, sycamore, and others. Popular shrubs include alders, viburnums, and three species of dogwood.

New Employee

The John Marshall SWCD welcomes its newest employee, Sonny Lawrence, who started work in April as an Erosion and Sediment Specialist. Sonny is a 1982 graduate of BOCES, the Board of Cooperative Educational Services in Upstate New York,



where he majored in Conservation and Park Recreation Development. He has worked in conservation and construction since the mid 1980's. Since the early 90's, Sonny has worked in soils and new home construction, so (in his own words) he has seen both sides of the fence. Sonny lives in Manassas with his wife Melissa, and children Justin, who is 17, and Courtney, who is 14. He loves American history, relic hunting, RC trucks and planes, and all outdoor events. His pride and joy are his kids.

Cost-Share Incentives for Agricultural Producers

The FY2006 Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share Program begins July 1, 2005. If you are interested in protecting water quality and receiving 75% of the estimated cost and a 25% tax credit on out of pocket expenses, contact the John Marshall SWCD at (540) 347-3120, extension 3. There is money available for stream fencing, hardened crossings, livestock watering troughs, and other practices.

Calendar of Events

July 9 - Cut Flower Growers Field Meeting, King & Queen County, Contact Andy Hankins, 804-524-5962

July 14-17 - Fauquier County Fair, Warrenton
<http://www.fauquierfair.org/> for info

July 18 - Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the Assoc. of Specialty Cut Flowers summer meeting, Louisa County, Contact Joyce Latimer, 540-231-7906.

July 29 - Winter Grazing Starts Now, 6-8pm, Mt. Vernon Stock Farm, Sperryville, Contact Carl Stafford, 540-727-3435 x 351

Aug. 5 - Central Virginia Beef Educational Field Day and Sale, Radiant, Contact Steve Hopkins, 540-672-1361

Sept. 17 - Fauquier County Fall Farm Tour, Contact Ray Pickering - 540-349-5314



The Conservation Strip is a quarterly publication of the **JOHN MARSHALL SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**, 98 Alexandria Pike, Suite 31, Warrenton, VA 20186

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Clearing the Logjam - Literally

Personnel from the John Marshall SWCD and the Virginia Department of Forestry removed an old logjam from Great Run on June 7. Using a bulldozer, and old fashioned manpower, the crew removed several tons of logs and debris that served as an effective barrier to movement of fish up Great Run.

Since the breaching of Embrey Dam on the Rappahannock River in 2004, fish biologists have collected herring, shad, and striped bass several miles up river from the dam. Shad were also stocked in the upper Rappahannock in 2003 and 2004 in efforts to restore the historical shad run.

Based on physical characteristics of the river, and historical records, fish biologists believe shad and herring should come up the Rappahannock to the vicinity of Fauquier Springs Country Club on Rt. 802. Great Run joins the Rappahannock below Fauquier Springs. Herring are known to use tributaries of mainstem rivers



Tom Turner, JMSWCD Conservation Specialist, wraps a cable around part of a logjam in Great Run. The cable was attached to a Department of Forestry bulldozer which pulled the logs out of the stream.

for spawning purposes, and biologists believe Great Run has the potential to host herring runs in the future.

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